

## V.—Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.

## 1. 'The Avicultural Magazine.'

[The Avicultural Magazine. Third Series. Vol. i. Nos. 10-12 (August-October, 1910).]

The most interesting paper to the readers of 'The Ibis' in these three numbers will probably be that on the Cock of the Rock (col. pl.) by Mr. W. Frost, who narrates the bird's habits as observed in Guiana, and his experiences in netting it. Mr. Seth-Smith describes the successful termination of his visit to Australia on behalf of the Zoological Society, with details of a couple of short trips in Tasmania; Mr. Bonhote concludes his notes on the age of birds in confinement, mentioning several that had lived with him for over ten years; while Mr. Finn once more furnishes interesting "Stray Notes" on several Indian species. Besides these, Mr. C. B. Smith has much information to give us on the Sand-Grouse (*Pterocles fasciatus* and *P. exustus*), as kept in his aviaries, and on *Lagopus rupestris*, which has laid eggs there; Mr. R. Phillips records a further case of successful breeding of the Pied Rock-Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*); and Mr. Goodchild finishes his account of his "ornithological rambles."

Further articles on individual species are written by Messrs. E. J. Brook (a pet Cassowary), W. E. Teschemaker (nesting of *Serinus sulphuratus*), R. B. Woosnam (*Scops erlangeri*, pl., and *Glaucidium perlatum*, pl.), and J. L. Bonhote (*Spindalis pretrei*, col. pl.).

The Bird-notes from the Zoological Gardens are of more than ordinary interest, as, besides notices of the breeding of *Microtribonyx ventralis* and other species, we are presented with a plate of the Hammer-head (*Scopus umbretta*) and its nest. This nest many of us have seen in the Gardens, and we are now told that the young were successfully hatched.

## 2. Benham on the Moa of Stewart Island.

[The Discovery of Moa-Remains on Stewart Island. By Prof. W. B. Benham, F.R.S. Trans. New Zealand Inst. 1909.]

The discovery of remains of the Moa in Stewart Island is

interesting, since positive evidence of its former existence there had not been recorded. Mr. W. F. Murdoch, of Half-Moon Bay, brought the discovery to the notice of Prof. Benham, and allowed him to examine the specimens. They consist of a femur, tibio-tarsus, tarso-metatarsus, back of a cranium, and two terminal phalanges, and belong to *Euryapteryx (Emeus) crassa*, a species from five to six feet in height, fairly common on the South Island. Remains of two specimens were found, one being much smaller than the other.

### 3. *Bucknill's List of the Birds of Cyprus.*

[Cyprus Natural History Society, Bulletin No. 11. A List of the Birds of Cyprus, compiled for the Cyprus Natural History Society by John A. S. Bucknill. 8vo, pp. 27. Nicosia, 1910.]

After a few prefatory remarks on the principal investigators of the Ornithology of Cyprus and their publications, Mr. Bucknill gives a list of the 290 species of birds as yet known to occur there, taken from his articles "On the Ornithology of Cyprus," published in this Journal in 1909 and 1910\*. A few notes are added to the name of each bird.

### 4. *Butler on Foreign Birds for Aviaries.*

[Foreign Birds for Cage and Aviary. By Arthur G. Butler, Ph.D. &c. Part II. The Larger Foreign Birds. London, 1910. 305 pp., small 4to.]

The second part of Mr. Butler's work finishes his account of the cage-birds to be met with in the European markets. In the first part the smaller forms were described, in the second we now find the larger, the two parts together containing accounts of about a thousand species.

In the twenty chapters of the present volume the author has described such members of the groups of Starlings, Bower-birds, Paradise-birds, Manucodes, Larks, Pittas, Tyrants, Chatterers, Oven-birds, Woodpeckers, Colies, Kingfishers, Motmots, Bee-eaters, Toucans, Barbets, Touracous,

\* See 'Ibis,' 1909, p. 569, and 1910, pp. 1 & 385.

Parrots, and Doves as have been received alive in Europe. Of all these birds, after the scientific and English name, a short description is given, with an abstract of the principal facts known about them. About 80 illustrations are included in the text, some of which are of special interest.

We must say that all our friends the Aviculturists ought to be exceedingly grateful to Mr. Butler for the pains he has taken in the compilation of this book, which will save them enormous trouble. To ascertain the name of a living bird is no easy matter nowadays. All sorts of books and periodicals, many of which may not be of easy access, must be searched through, and perhaps in vain! We do not say that this work will enable us to solve the riddles at once, but it will be a considerable help. We cordially commend Mr. Butler's book on cage-birds to the notice of all those who keep our feathered friends in captivity and wish to know their scientific names.

#### 5. *The Check-list of North-American Birds.*

[Check-list of North-American Birds, prepared by a Committee of the American Ornithologists' Union. Third edition (revised). New York, 1910.]

The long-expected third edition of the 'Check-list of North-American Birds' was issued in August last, but too late to be noticed in our last number.

The geographical boundaries of the List remain as before—that is, "the Continent of North America north of the United States and Mexican Boundary, Greenland, and the peninsula of Lower California, with the islands naturally belonging thereto."

The species are not numbered in the present edition, but are stated to be about the same in number as those in the second edition (*i. e.* 768), besides which there are a large number of subspecies. These are indicated by letters (*a*, *b*, *c*, &c.). *Melospiza* has 20 subspecies and *Otocorys* 14. In the main portion of the List the species and subspecies are taken in systematic order from the lowest to the highest, and after the Latin and English names a reference to the authority

for the former is added. The range of each form is carefully indicated, but no sort of description is given.

The scientific names of the species and subspecies have all been settled according to the "Revised Code of Nomenclature," published by the Union in 1908. It would be impossible, of course, even if it were desirable, to criticise these names on the present occasion. But the key to them is the terrible word "Priority." Now Priority is, no doubt, a very important point. But the claims of Grammar and Common-sense should be also considered, and, in some cases, that does not appear to have been done. For instance, the Red-wing is called "*Turdus musicus*," although the evidence that Linnæus ever intended to give it that name is very slight, and universal usage is against it. Again the "Varied Thrush" of California is named "*Ixoreus*," although it has been most clearly shown that Bonaparte based that generic name on a Tyrant-bird\*, *Tenioptera rufiventris*. But these are very slight defects in a good piece of work, which carries the signatures of Allen, Merriam, and Ridgway, and will, no doubt, receive the general approval of American Ornithologists.

#### 6. *Check-list of North-American Birds abridged.*

[Abridged Check-list of North-American Birds. New York, 1910; pp. 77.]

This list contains the scientific and English names of all the North-American species and subspecies of Birds recognised in the new (third) edition of the 'Check-list.' The species are numbered from 1 to 768, the subspecies are designated by letters (*a*, *b*, *c*, &c.) attached to the number of the species.

This little book will be very useful for marking off species represented in museums and other collections. It is not much larger than an ordinary pocket-book, and, therefore, easily portable.

\* Cf. 'Ibis,' 1908, p. 190, and 1903, p. 142.

7. *Dewar on Indian Birds.*

[Indian Birds, being a Key to the Common Birds of the Plains of India. By Douglas Dewar. 1 vol., demy 8vo, 228 pp. John Lane: London and New York.]

The object of this book is, as the author informs us, "to enable people interested in our Indian birds to identify at sight those they are likely to meet with in their compounds and during their excursions into the jungle." This is a most praiseworthy object, and we have no doubt that Mr. Dewar's little volume will be of material assistance in meeting the want of such a guide, though it is drawn up in a somewhat novel manner. The method adopted is to classify the "birds of the plains" under several categories "according to their habits and outward appearances." Every bird has a colour, and presents some other peculiarity (such as a crest, a short tail, long legs, or a peculiar voice) which enables it to be divided from its fellows and arranged in a certain group, specified by the author. Thus if the observer sees a white bird with a crested head and a long tail and examines Mr. Dewar's lists, he will find that No. 47 is the only species that combines these three peculiarities. On turning to the "Descriptive List," which forms the second half of the work, "No. 47" will be found to be the Indian Paradise Flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*). This may be not a very scientific way for the young Ornithologist to learn the names of his birds, but it is a simple one, and may be of some use to a beginner. Mr. Dewar thinks that it will enable any person to identify in a few weeks nearly all the common birds of his Station.

8. '*The Emu.*'

[The Emu. A Quarterly Magazine to popularize the Study and Protection of Native Birds. Vol. x. pts. 1, 2.]

In the first of these parts we have an important paper by a New Zealander, Mr. T. Iredale, on the Birds of the Kermadec Islands, which lie between that country and the Friendly Islands to the northward. The writer remained on Raoul or Sunday Island, the chief of the group, from

December 1907 till November 1908, and therefore was able to gain a much better insight into its Ornithology than John MacGillivray during the survey made in 1854, or Cheeseman at its annexation to New Zealand in 1887. Many and various are the points of interest, but we have only space here to refer specially to the Petrels of the genera *Puffinus* and *Æstrelata*, the synonymy and breeding-habits of which are discussed at full length. No one interested in the group can afford to ignore this article. The Tui was found to be abundant; while the European Song-Thrush, Blackbird, and Starling have reached Sunday Island and firmly established themselves there. Plates are given of the Crater Lake, the downy young of *Sula cyanops*, *Phaëthon erubescens*, *Æstrelata neglecta*, and the nesting-places of the two latter.

Dr. W. MacGillivray writes at length of an oologist's holiday on the Barrier Range near Broken Hill, N.S.W., where a great number of birds' nests and eggs were examined, and continues his paper in the second part of the volume. Mr. G. M. Mathews publishes a list of seventeen additions to his 'Hand-list of the Birds of Australasia,' and in the October number continues his list of the Birds of North-West Australia, with notes on the colour of the bill, eyes, and so forth, and on the contents of the stomachs.

In the two numbers we find a description by Mr. J. W. Mellor of a new form of Crow-Shrike, *Strepera plumbea*, from Eyre Peninsula, S.A., its nest and eggs; and also of the hitherto unknown nests and eggs of *Pœcilodryas pulverulentus* and *Malurus dulcis* from Napier Broome Bay by Mr. H. L. White; while Mr. Mathews is again to the fore with a description of the type-specimen of *Rhipidura phasianus* De Vis, accompanied by a coloured plate.

Distributional papers are well represented by those of Mr. A. F. Crossman (cont.), C. Gubanyi, and A. P. Ingle, on the Broome district, N. W. A., Sandy Creek, Riverina, N.S.W., and Merriman's Creek, South Gippsland, respectively.

In the October number Mr. S. W. Jackson furnishes a most interesting series of additional notes on the habits of the Tooth-billed Bower-bird (*Scenopœetes dentirostris*),

Mr. L. G. Chandler writes on the Pardalotes, and H. S. Dove on *Petroeca vittata*. Similar articles in the earlier number deal with the Victorian Sericornes (Mr. A. G. Campbell), *Ptilotis cassidix* (Messrs. F. E. Wilson and L. G. Chandler), *Catarrhactes chrysocome* in captivity (Mr. E. B. Nicholls), and the Regent Bird (Mr. P. H. Gilbert).

In conclusion, we may refer to shorter articles or notes—on the “Destruction of Birds” by Mr. J. W. Mellor, on subfossil Bird-remains from King Island, Bass Straits (including those of *Dromæus minor*), from Mem. Nat. Mus. Melbourne, on the taming of wild Blue-bellied Lorikeets by a lady (pl.), and the insertion of a portrait of our lost Ornithologist, Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, in the “Notes and Notices.”

#### 9. *Finn on Asiatic Waterfowl.*

[The Waterfowl of India and Asia. By F. Finn. Calcutta, 1909. 121 pp.]

This is a revised edition of the author's work ‘How to know the Indian Ducks,’ and furnishes a useful summary of all that is known of the various species, brought up to date, with brief notices and descriptions of the non-Indian forms. It is apparently meant in the first place for Anglo-Indians, and keys to the species are formed for their benefit. Heads of the Ducks likely to be met with by local sportsmen are given as aids to identification. A first Appendix is devoted to a “Synoptical Table of the Indian Anatidæ,” a second to a “Table of colours of full-plumaged males,” and a third to “Aviaries for Ducks.”

#### 10. *Flower's Report on the Zoological Gardens of Giza.*

[Zoological Gardens, Giza, near Cairo. Report for the Year 1909 (Eleventh Annual Report). By the Director. Cairo, 1910.\*]

The Report on the Zoological Garden at Giza, near Cairo, gives us a very favorable account of its progress in every department during the year 1909. Of course, the more prominent objects in all such institutions are the Mammals; but Birds, as will be seen by the Report, are by no means neglected at Giza, and allusions to them will be found in

\* Cf. Report for 1908, ‘Ibis,’ 1909, p. 701.

nearly every page of the Report. At the stock-taking, in November, 797 specimens of birds were counted, referable to 207 species, amongst which the Pigeons and Parrots were most numerous. The new buildings erected in 1909 were a new Vulture-cage and a new Crane-paddock. Amongst the birds new to the collection were two Egyptian Lark-headed Cuckoos (*Centropus ægyptius*) from the Fayum. Twenty species of birds bred in the Gardens in 1909, and 16 others laid eggs but did not succeed in hatching them.

The collection of Egyptian bird-skins, formed mainly by Mr. Nicoll for the purpose of correct identification, contained 1180 specimens on the 31st of December, 1909, as compared with 675 at the corresponding date in 1908.

Capt. Flower has prepared a new edition of his 'List of all the Zoological Gardens in the World,' arranged alphabetically, which is a very useful publication to all those who are interested in this subject, and contains the names of the Directors of the various Gardens. Over 100 of such institutions are registered in the List.

### 11. *Fulton on the Bronze Cuckoo of New Zealand.*

[The "Pipiharauroa" or Bronze Cuckoo (*Chalcococcyx lucidus*) of New Zealand, and an Account of its Habits. By Robert Fulton, M.D. Trans. New Zealand Inst. 1909, p. 392.]

This Cuckoo is a summer visitor to New Zealand, arriving at the end of September and, like many Cuckoos, deposits its eggs in other birds' nests. It departs from New Zealand in February, and is said to go to "New Guinea," but more evidence on this point is required. Mr. Fulton gives a long account of its "wicked ways," and concludes with a list of previous authorities on the subject, 48 in number.

### 12. *Gladstone on the Birds of Dumfriesshire.*

[The Birds of Dumfriesshire. A Contribution to the Fauna of the Solway Area. By Hugh S. Gladstone. London, 1910: Witherby & Co. 8vo, pp. i-xcix, 1-482.]

The Solway area, which contains not only Dumfriesshire, Kirkeudbrightshire, and Wigtownshire, but also parts of Ayrshire, Roxburghshire, and Northumberland, lacks a



historian of its whole avifauna, though Sir William Jardine lived in it of old. We therefore cordially welcome this work on one of its counties by Mr. Gladstone, the more so as we are sorry to hear that Mr. R. Service may be unable to publish his intended volume on the entire district. The author has taken great trouble to make the book as perfect an account of the birds as possible, and has spared no pains in examining the literature of the subject and investigating doubtful records. To a great extent it may be considered an account of the birds of the Solway, as constant references are made to the distribution of species in the area, and a whole chapter is devoted to migration. Bird-protection, local names, and the use of flight-nets have also separate sections allotted to them, while the physical features and climate are discussed at very considerable length. In short, we have here an admirable piece of work, almost too long for a single volume, as will be seen from the number of pages. Perhaps the Bibliography might have been abbreviated, but even this will appeal to the local men of science, while the account of former writers on the Ornithology of the county is of interest to us all. Some of the most valuable sections are those on such birds as the Hawfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Stock-Dove, and Tufted Duck, which have increased conspicuously in Scotland of late years, on the former breeding of the Bittern and Ptarmigan in the Solway, and that on the occurrence of such rarities as the Blue-winged Teal and Lesser White-fronted Goose. Two hundred and eighteen species are included in the list, while thirty-nine others are doubtfully recorded. No student of local faunas can afford to be without this book, which may be compared in style of treatment with those of Dr. Ticehurst on Kentish Birds and of Messrs. Coward and Forrest on the Vertebrate Fauna of Cheshire and North Wales respectively.

13. *Grant's List of British Birds.*

[A List of British Birds, showing at a Glance the exact Status of each Species. Revised to August, 1910. By W. R. Ogilvie-Grant. Witherby & Co., 1910. 8vo, 69 pp.]

Having been frequently asked during the last few years

for a complete list of British Birds, printed in such a form that it could be cut up and used for labelling specimens, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant has prepared the present catalogue, which is specially adapted for that purpose. So many additions to the British Avifauna have been made since Howard Saunders's 'List of British Birds' was revised in 1907 that a new list was much wanted.

The new List contains the names of 442 species, considered to be entitled to a place in the British Avifauna. Besides these, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant gives the names of others, of which "the history is doubtful" or "which have, perhaps, been artificially introduced," but these names are not numbered and are placed in square brackets. The 442 numbered species are divided into five categories:— (1) Residents; (2) Regular Summer Visitors that Breed; (3) Regular Autumn, Winter, or Spring Visitors that do not Breed; (4) Occasional Visitors that in former days used to Breed; (5) Occasional Visitors that have never been known to Breed. The exact "status" of each bird, according to the author's view, is clearly shown in a series of columns following its name, so that it is very readily ascertainable.

Another good feature in this List is that the names of the numerous species recently added to the British Avifauna are all carefully inserted in their places, and references are given to the works in which their occurrences in this country have been recorded. This will make the List very useful to the collector, who, up to the present time, has been obliged to hunt up such records in a dozen different periodicals. But, on the other hand, the classification adopted, which appears to be nearly that of the Bird-Gallery in the British Museum, beginning with the lower forms and ending with the Passeres, will, in our opinion, be far from popular. The author quotes Saunders's 'Manual' throughout his List, and refers to Saunders's dicta continually. Why, then, did he not use Saunders's classification, which is nearly the same as that of the 'Ibis List,' and is familiar to all British Ornithologists? We are also of opinion that the addition of the authority to the scientific

name of the species is quite unnecessary—at any rate, in the case of “British Birds.” Linnæus proposed to have only *two* names for each species. If the authority is always to be added that will make *three*. But the “authority” is not an essential part of the name and is in many cases quite a useless appendage to it.

14. *Griffith on Additions to the Booth Collection of Birds.*

[Catalogue of Cases of Birds in the Dyke Road Museum, Brighton, being a Supplement to the Third Edition. By A. F. Griffith. Brighton, 1909. 38 pp.]

On more than one occasion\* we have called attention to the excellent collection of mounted birds contained in the Museum on the Dyke Road, Brighton. Founded by the late Mr. Booth, mainly on specimens obtained by his own personal exertions in various parts of the British Islands, it was taken up by the Civic Authorities after Mr. Booth's decease, and by other liberal supporters of good works, while it has now become one of the recognised sights of Brighton. It is certainly well worthy of a visit from everyone interested in birds.

The Catalogue of the collection is just now out of print, but Mr. A. F. Griffith, who is chief adviser of the Committee of Management as regards acquisitions, has lately prepared a Supplement to the Third Edition, which contains a list of the specimens, some 70 in number, recently added to the mounted series, with particulars as to their localities and notes on the mode in which they were obtained. They embrace many interesting forms—such as the Black-headed Bunting, American Bittern, Blue-breast, Black-throated Thrush, and White-winged Lark. All the specimens are excellently mounted.

15. *Gunning and Haagner on the Birds of South Africa.*

[A Check-List of the Birds of South Africa. By Dr. J. W. B. Gunning and Alwin Haagner. Pretoria, 1910. Pp. 84.]

“Check-lists” and “Hand-lists” are much in fashion nowadays, and are useful in their way, but they should

\* Cf. ‘Ibis,’ 1907, p. 639, and 1909, p. 388.

not be confined to a mere list of names without localities. Nor is it necessary to have two rival Lists of the birds of the same country based on different authorities.

After finishing his four volumes of "Birds" in the 'Fauna of South Africa,' Mr. W. L. Selater prepared a Check-list of the species, including additions made during the progress of the work, and published it in the 'Annals of the South African Museum.' It enumerated about 1848 species as then ascertained to belong to the South African Avifauna, and naturally followed, as closely as possible, the order and arrangement used in the four volumes of the 'Fauna.' The authors of the present work now give us a new "Check-list" with exactly the same title, and publish it as a "Supplement" to the 'Annals of the Transvaal Museum.' Had they followed the classification and arrangement of the previous Check-list, making only the necessary additions and corrections, we should not have found fault with them. But, so far from doing this, they have "gone to Berlin" and taken their arrangement and nomenclature from Dr. Reichenow's 'Vögel Afrikas.' This is an excellent work, no doubt, but it is founded on entirely different principles from Mr. Selater's book, and begins at the bottom of the Class of Birds instead of commencing with the highest. Thus the ornithologist in South Africa will be confronted with two rival systems, and, in many cases, will be puzzled how to choose between them.

The Pretorian Check-list contains the names of 920 species, and gives also the names in Dutch and English, together with references to the works of W. L. Selater and Reichenow. At the end is placed a series of notes containing recent information on about 100 species.

#### 16. *Lönning on Birds from Transbaicalia and Mongolia.*

[Notes on Birds collected by Mr. Otto Bamberg in Southern Transbaikalia and Northern Mongolia. By Einar Lönning. *Arkiv f. Zool.* Band v. No. 9 (1909).]

Dr. Lönning describes the collection of birds made by Mr. Otto Bamberg, of Weimar, during an expedition to

Northern Mongolia and the northern parts of Transbaikalia. He first gives a few particulars about the thirty localities in which Mr. Bamberg collected and illustrates them by some photographic pictures, beginning at Kiachta and ending at Urga. He also mentions the most characteristic birds of each station. The specimens are referred to about 75 species, of which four are provided with new names:—*Garrulus glandarius bambergi*, *Saxicola œnanthe argentea*, *Dendrocopus major mongolus*, and *Upupa epops saturata*. We observe that our Common Grey Flycatcher is here called "*Muscicapa ficedula neumanni*"! We may remark that a better name for it is *Muscicapa grisola*, by which it has been known for the past one hundred and fifty years. It is probable, we admit, that the *Muscicapa ficedula* of Linnæus's tenth edition was based on a Grey Flycatcher, but it is by no means certain. Dr. Hartert is doubtful on the subject (Vög. pal. Faun. i. p. 475).

Mr. Bamberg secured a male specimen of *Micropalama laczanowskia* in full breeding plumage at Bura in May, 1908 (cf. also 'Ibis,' 1909, p. 418, pl. vii.).

### 17. *MacGillivray on the Life of William MacGillivray.*

[Life of William MacGillivray. By William MacGillivray, W.S., with a Scientific Appreciation by J. Arthur Thomson. London: John Murray, 1910. 8vo, pp. i-xiii, 1-222.]

On the occasion of the erection of a monument to William MacGillivray at Edinburgh and a memorial tablet at Aberdeen, the author of this work prepared a short sketch of his relation's life for private circulation. This has now been expanded into the present volume, as no detailed biography of the great ornithologist has been written since his death. At this distance of time we are apt to forget the services that MacGillivray rendered to science, and especially to our branch of it, not only by his careful and accurate work and the instruction which he bestowed on his students, but by his researches into the true methods of classification. He was the first writer in Britain to point out the necessity for taking into account the internal

as well as the external organs of Birds, and may be considered the originator of all modern systems of taxonomy. His 'History of British Birds' was based on this principle, while his investigations were carried on during the whole of his earlier life at Edinburgh, where he was successively Assistant Keeper of the Natural History Museum and Conservator of the Museum of the College of Surgeons, as well as at Aberdeen after his election to the post of Professor of Natural History at Marischal College. MacGillivray was a botanist and geologist, as well as a zoologist—a combination not so rare in those days as now—and wrote Manuals on all three subjects; he is also well-known to have collaborated with Audubon in his 'Ornithological Biographies,' and to have supplied most of the technical matter. Ornithology, however, was his favourite subject in manhood, and it was through this that his great friendship with Audubon was formed. MacGillivray's personality was remarkable, as will be seen from the details of his life; his early struggles, his laborious journeys for scientific purposes in Scotland, and still more his arduous walk from Aberdeen to London with only £10 in his pocket, shew a determination and energy beyond his years, while he seems to have been of a lovable nature and to have been highly esteemed by those associated with him.

Prof. Thomson writes an appreciative notice of his life in the penultimate chapter, while the last is devoted to extracts from the various works that he published.

#### 18. *Madarász on new East-African Birds.*

[Neue Vögel aus Ostafrika. Von Dr. Julius v. Madarász. Archivum Zoologicum, vol. i. no. 11, p. 175 (1910).]

In this new zoological journal Dr. J. v. Madarász gives an account of some birds obtained by Herr Koloman Kittenberger in German East Africa, in the district of Ngare-Dowash, on the southern side of Lake Victoria. The new species described are named *Phyllastrephus dowashanus*, *Crateropus reichenowi*, *Sylviella distinguenda*, *Anthoscopus kolomanni*, and *Apus kittenbergi*. The pretty

nest of the *Anthoscopus* is nicely figured. Some new eggs from the same collector are also described. Two eggs of *Turacus chalcophus* were taken from a nest on an Acacia, built like that of a Wood-Pigeon and about twelve feet from the ground. They are of a dull white, without lustre.

19. *Martorelli on Variation in the Ring-Ousel.*

[Le Variazioni della *Merula torquata* (Naum.). By Prof. Giacinto Martorelli. Atti Soc. Ital. Sci. Nat. lviii. (1910), 27 pp., 1 pl. (separately printed).]

The author does not consider that *Merula alpestris* and *M. orientalis* are valid species, while he has taken great trouble to examine into the question of the variations of the Ring-Ousel. He has watched the living birds, and has procured examples at all ages and in all states of plumage, chiefly from Italy. The variation, which appears to be considerable, is further shown by a plate depicting the separate feathers.

20. *Mathews on the Birds of Australia.*

[The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews. With hand-coloured plates. Vol. i. pt. i. London: November, 1910. Witherby & Co.]

We have now before us the first part of this new work on Australian Birds, which is the more welcome as that of Gould has been long out of date, and we shall now be able to form a clear opinion on the validity of any species or subspecies that has been described since his day, and to get a more comprehensive grasp of the avifauna of the Commonwealth than is possible when the literature was scattered. Mr. Mathews is himself a native of Australia, who has lived among the birds of the country, while he now resides near London, and therefore has ready access to British collections. He has himself a very extensive library of books dealing with his subject, to which he is constantly adding, and is thereby enabled to make a point of checking every reference, and also to state with certainty the locality whence the type-specimen of any form has

been derived. Moreover, he has a very large collection of skins of Australian Birds, which should enable him to describe with accuracy the changes of plumage from the immature to the adult stage. He also employs at least one collector in every State of the Commonwealth, who continually forwards fresh consignments of material, with notes on the colours of those parts so apt to fade in preserved specimens.

Under each genus the author gives the synonymy, a short diagnosis, and a statement of distribution, followed by a key to the species. Similar details are to be found under the head of each species, with a full description, where possible, of the adult, the immature bird, and the chick. Details of the nest, eggs, and time of incubation are followed by a life-history of the bird and the literature dealing with it, long quotations being given from the accounts of actual observers. The plates, drawn by Keulemans, are good examples of that clever draughtsman's art.

In this part—which includes the Emus, the Cassowary, the Mound-builders, the Quails, and the Hemipodes—we may draw special attention in the first place to the four Emus, never previously figured in the same work. The Tasmanian form, now considered subspecifically distinct from that of the continent, is figured for the first time; while the King Island Emu is finally separated from that of Kangaroo Island as *Dromæus minor*, and a reproduction of Lesueur's plate in Péron's 'Voyage' is given, being one of the figures which Mr. Mathews considers to represent it. The letterpress must, however, be consulted for full details, and also for accounts of the other birds included in this part, to which space does not permit us to do more than refer to in passing.

*Turnix olivii*, of which only a single specimen is known, is also figured here; while it is claimed that the account now given of the life-histories of the Emus and Mound-builders in particular will clear up a good deal of misapprehension.



We do not quite understand why the articles are headed by trinomial appellations, whereas the names on the plates are binomial, and we do not like the spelling *Dromaius* for *Dromæus*. This can hardly be called a case of following the earliest spelling, but of foreswearing the practice of the Latin language itself. Are we to call Æneas Aineas, or Cyrus Kuros?

### 21. *Ménégaux on Birds from Bolivia and South Peru.*

[Etude d'une Collection d'Oiseaux provenant des hauts plateaux de la Bolivie et du Pérou Méridionale. Par A. Ménégaux. Bull. Soc. Philom. 1909.]

This collection contained examples of 51 species, some of which are of considerable interest—*Diuca behni* Reichen., *Pseudochloris olivascens berlepschi* (subsp. nov.), *Agriornis andecola paznæ* Ménég., *Fulica cornuta* Bp., *F. gigantea* Eyd. et Soul., *Phænicopterus jamesi* Sel., and *Podiceps micropterus* (from Lake Titicaca).

### 22. *Pycraft on Birds.*

[A History of Birds. By W. P. Pycraft. With an Introduction by Sir Ray Lankester, K.C.B., F.R.S. With numerous Illustrations and Diagrams. London, 1910: Methuen & Co. 8vo, pp. i-xxx, 1-458.]

Mr. Pycraft's latest work, while it is of a somewhat popular nature, is the first of its kind to be written from the point of view of evolution. The idea is, of course, far from being new to scientific men, but books written for the general public have heretofore either treated the subject from a systematic standpoint or at least have not taken evolution as the main subject of their discourse. A glance at the table of contents will shew the wide scope of the present treatise, which, beginning with an essay on the general structure of Birds, their gradual development and relationships, proceeds to give a most excellent account of them as they are at the present day, their distribution, the effect of their surroundings, their migration, and their life-history in general. Their inter-relations with other animals and plants and their social habits

furnish much food for thought; while the pugnacity and display of the males are considered in connexion with their ways in the breeding-season. Mr. Pycraft devotes a good deal of space to the question of reproduction and care of the young, and impresses upon us the fact that the study of Birds is one of living organisms, moulded by their inherent constitution and by the struggle for existence; while his whole book shews how far evolution has succeeded in attaining the objects for which it was intended. His knowledge of Osteology and Pterylography has greatly assisted him throughout, and he has taken much trouble to collect the large mass of facts which he now produces for our edification. Embryology is not treated in great detail, as it constitutes a separate subject in itself, but the young bird in general, its coloration, its changes of plumage up to the adult stage, and so forth, are discussed at considerable length. The author is inclined to minimize the effect of sexual selection and to rely on natural selection as the chief agent in the production of a robust progeny, while he does not consider that acquired characters are transmissible. Apart from the special interest of the evolutionary development of the bird-world, there is much worthy of note in the final chapters, which among other subjects deal with artificial selection, the effects of isolation, structural and functional adaptations; while the last chapter of all is devoted to an account of convergent evolution, as in the case of the Owls and the Nightjars.

Mr. Pycraft states his own views freely throughout, and in most places we cordially agree with him, but in some cases, such as his theory of a direct north and south migration, we are hardly disposed to follow him on present information.

In conclusion, we must not omit to mention Sir Ray Lankester's masterly preface, which not only sums up admirably the main points of the book, but serves to call attention to those that are to be considered of the greatest importance.

This 'History of Birds' is one of the volumes of a series on 'Animal Life,' produced under the editorship of Mr. Pycraft, and we have no doubt that the whole of them will

be up to the standard of the present excellent and valuable treatise. The illustrations are good and well suited to the text.

### 23. *The 'South African Journal.'*

[The Journal of the South African Ornithologists' Union. Vol. v. No. 3; Vol. vi. No. 1 (August, 1910).]

As the third number of the fifth volume of our contemporary only contains the Index, Minutes of Proceedings, and so forth, we are only concerned with the first number of the succeeding volume. This contains the Migration Report of South Africa for 1908-1909, and a special article on that of the White Stork by Mr. Haagner; no less than nine Storks "ringed" by the Vogelwarte Rossitten and the Royal Hungarian Bureau have been met with in the country, and of these occurrences particulars are given where possible.

Mr. C. G. Davies furnishes us with "A Second Contribution to the Ornithology of Eastern Pondoland," including both migratory and breeding species of birds; and Mr. F. Vaughan-Kirby contributes interesting field-notes on the recently discovered *Hemipteryx minuta*. A new species of Flycatcher, *Hyliota rhodesiæ*, is described by Mr. Haagner from the Matoppo Hills in Rhodesia; but he is careful to warn us that it may prove to be only an example of *H. australis* in a plumage unknown to him.

### 24. *Swarth on Two new Owls from Arizona.*

[Two new Owls from Arizona, with the Description of the Juvenal Plumage of *Strix occidentalis*. By Harry S. Swarth. Univ. of California Publ. in Zool. vol. vii. No. 1, p. 1 (1910).]

The two subspecies described as new are named *Otus asio gilmani* and *Strix occidentalis huachucae*. The type-specimens are in the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at Berkeley, California.

25. *Thanner on the Birds of Grand Canary Island.*

[Beiträge zur Ornithologie Gran Canaria's. Von Rudolf v. Thanner. Orn. Jahrb. xxi. Heft 3 (1910).]

A few years ago it was supposed that the Birds of the Canary Islands were identical with the Birds of Europe, or nearly so. Only a few well-marked species were allowed to be distinct from their European representatives—*Fringilla teydea*, *Columba laurivora*, *C. bollii*, &c.

Nowadays, however, all is changed, and a large number of the Canarian forms have been separated as subspecies. Herr von Thanner, who, we believe, is a resident in Tenerife, passed four months in 1909 in Grand Canary, collecting for Dr. Koenig, and now gives us some of the results of his observations, which are well worthy of study, though we may not accept all the subspecies which he recognises. In his list of 50 species, representatives of which Herr v. Thanner collected or observed, no less than 23 have a third subspecific name attached to them. These, however, have not, in most cases, been given to them by Herr v. Thanner, but by Koenig, Madarász, Hartert, Polatzek, and other recent writers on Canarian Birds.

26. *Van Oort on new Birds from New Guinea.*

[Description of Eight new Birds collected by Mr. H. A. Lorenz in South-western New Guinea. By Dr. E. D. Van Oort. Notes Leyden Mus. xxxii. p. 211.]

Mr. Lorenz has brought back a collection of nearly one thousand bird-skins from his successful expedition to the snowy mountains of New Guinea. A report on the whole collection will be published in a work called 'Nova Guinea.' Meanwhile, Dr. Van Oort gives us descriptions of eight new species from the higher ranges. These are *Anurophasis monorthonyx*, gen. et sp. nov. Gallinarum; *Psittacella lorentzi*, sp. nov., *Pœcilodryas quadrimaculatus*, sp. nov.; *Pœcilodryas caniceps pectoralis*, subsp. nov.; *Paramythia montium olivacea*, subsp. nov.; *Daphenositta miranda frontalis*, subsp. nov.; *Oreornis chrysogenys*, gen. et sp. nov. Meliphagidarum; and *Melirrhophetes noukuysi*, sp. nov.

27. *Winge's Report on the Birds of the Danish Lighthouses, 1909* \*.

[Fuglene ved de danske Fyr i 1909. 27de Aarsberetning om danske Fugle. Ved Herluf Winge. Vid. Meddel. f. d. nat. For. i Kbhvn., 1910.]

This is the twenty-seventh annual report on the birds killed at the Danish Lighthouses and sent to the Zoological Museum in Copenhagen for examination. In 1909, 1287 such specimens were received from 37 Lighthouses, but the duplicates were not sent in all cases, and the total number of birds that perished in this way must have been at least 3000.

The specimens received in Copenhagen are referred to 85 species, among which *Alauda arvensis*, *Sturnus vulgaris*, *Sylvia hortensis*, *Phylloscopus trochilus*, and *Ruticilla phœnicurus* were numerous. Of the Thrushes, *Turdus iliacus* contributed 148 victims, *T. musicus* 133, *T. pilaris* 31, *T. torquatus* 21, and *T. merula* 22, but of *T. viscivorus* only a single specimen was received. Single specimens of *Muscicapa parva* and *Phylloscopus superciliosus* were taken. Of the Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) 62 examples occurred. A large number of field-notes follow the systematic list, and a chart is added shewing the exact position of all the Lighthouses.

VI.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

WE have received the following letters addressed to the Editors:—

SIRS,—It may interest your readers to know that I have just received from the Vladivostok Museum for identification a small collection of 87 salted bird-skins, made this summer by Mr. I. E. Efresnov in the Khabarovsk district on the Lower Amur, near Lake Bolen-Adjäl, and that the collection contained a male specimen of the *Mergus squamatus* of Gould procured by Mr. G. I. Kornilaev on the river Kur

\* For a notice of the Report for 1908, see 'Ibis,' 1909, p. 712.